Whose Job Is It? Part 2
At the Board Table: A School Board Group Learning Experience
Whose Job Is It? Part 2

Introduction
As a service of IASB, we offer this “At the Board Table” as a way for your board to have a 20-30 minute “board development” item on your agenda. Boards that take time to discuss how they will work together generally find their common work at the board table to be easier and more effective.

It’s possible to consider this section as an individual board member, but it is much more effective if the entire board engages in the discussion. Working as a team is improved when boards come to a common understanding of ground rules and responsibilities.

If your board team conducts one of these discussions at your board table, each participant will earn five (5) Better Boardsmanship credits per session.

Next Steps for Meeting Facilitators
1. Add a development item to your next board meeting agenda.
2. Download or open the presentation from the web site here.
3. Print off the hand-outs on the following pages for each board member and include in their board packet, if possible.
   a. Page 3: Scenario
   c. Pages 5-6: Roles of the Board in Improving Student Learning
4. Review the presentation with your entire board.
5. This discussion tool is divided into:
   a. Discussion of a scenario and a consideration of what “areas of work” might need to be done.
   b. Consideration of some specific “tasks” and determination of what role the whole board, superintendent, or others would play in the situation.
   c. A brief statement of the board’s role in school improvement.
6. Once you’ve completed the discussion, complete and return the form on the last page of this handout to receive Better Boardsmanship credits.
Directions for Reading Scenario

As the board team reads the following brief scenario, ask yourselves: “What areas of work might emerge as needing to be done in this situation?” Simply talk about what actions might need to be taken to “lead the district forward.” As you identify tasks, you may find yourselves having some initial discussion about who might be in the best position to conduct these tasks. Before pressing the button for “IASB Thoughts on Possible Tasks,” be sure to address the “why” behind your answer.

Scenario

The Dreamfield School Board has been hearing a lot about the need to make sure students graduate “college and career” ready. They also learned that staff leadership recently identified literacy as an area of student need after studying district assessment data results. The board then read a portion of the Iowa Core that describes the literacy skills of “students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking and listening and language.” After much discussion, the board decided to make improved literacy a district-wide student learning goal for the next two-to-five years in Dreamfield: “All students will be college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language.” Now they are asking themselves:

What actions or areas of work might we look for that would indicate something is being done in working toward this goal?

Why?
Directions for Whose Job Is It? Discussion

The following are some specific tasks that Dreamfield is likely to find staff, administration, the superintendent, the superintendent/board team or others doing in this situation.

Please discuss “Whose job is it?” in relation to each of these tasks. Then click on “IASB Thoughts on Responsibilities” to review IASB’s thinking regarding best practice in this area.

- Discuss what “College and Career Ready” really involves, and what does that have to do with fourth graders?
- Identify what data will need to be studied to narrow the goal within the literacy content areas and determine where Dreamfield is in relation to the focused goal.
- Study options and select the initiative or actions the staff will implement to improve instruction that will result in increased student learning in the focused literacy goal area.
- Identify the amount of professional development time the staff will need to learn skills or strategies to implement the initiative or actions and compare that need to the existing professional development time allocated in the school calendar.
- Develop talking points to share with the community about the importance of additional staff development time (early dismissals, etc.) to help teachers strengthen instruction to ensure students graduate college and career ready.
Roles of the Board for Improving Student Learning

Based on the Iowa Lighthouse Research

The Iowa Lighthouse research studies frame five main leadership roles of the board in improving student learning, along with key actions of the board within those roles.

Set Clear Expectations

- Get clear about the greatest student learning needs – the most important content area to improve first
- Believe more is possible and communicate high expectations
- Establish a clear and narrow focus for improvement – clarify improvement goals and specific targets
- Focus on student learning and teaching (improving teaching as the key strategy for improving learning)

Hold the System Accountable to the Expectations

- Use data extensively
- Determine what you will accept as evidence of progress/success
- Monitor progress regularly
- Apply pressure for accountability

Create Conditions for Success

- Demonstrate commitment to the improvement focus through board actions and decisions
- Support quality professional development
- Stay the course
- Support & connect with district-wide leadership
- Develop and nurture the board/superintendent team leadership
- Ensure all parts of the system are aligned around the learning needs of students (curriculum, instruction, assessment; goals, actions, resource allocation; etc.)
**Build Collective Will**
- Create awareness of the need
- Create urgency around the moral purpose of improvement
- Instill hope that it’s possible to change
- Connect with the community

**Learn Together as a Board Team**
- Establish board learning time
- Learn together
- Talk to each other – extensive board conversations
- Develop a willingness and readiness to lead and allow others to lead
- Build commitment to the improvement focus through shared information and discussion
- Engage in deliberative policy development – lead through your policies
Notice of Participation

For Iowa board members: After taking part in this board discussion, you will be eligible to receive Better Boardsmanship credits. For IASB to track your participation, please complete this form and return to:

Iowa Association of School Boards
ATTN: Board Leadership Team
6000 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50312
Fax: 515-243-4992   Email: erhodes@ia-sb.org

Title of Tool: Whose Job Is It? Part Two

Date:__________ District:__________________________________________
(please print)

Participants (Print your name and tell us if you are a board member, president, vice president or superintendent.)

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Summary of Session (Please provide a short summary of how your discussion went and any feedback on this tool.)

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